This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Original) Alignment layer suitable for aligning liquid crystal (LC) molecules, characterized in that it comprises at least one reactive mesogen (RM) in monomeric, oligomeric or polymeric form.

2. (Original) Alignment layer according to claim 1, characterized in that it comprises less than 50 % by weight of RMs.

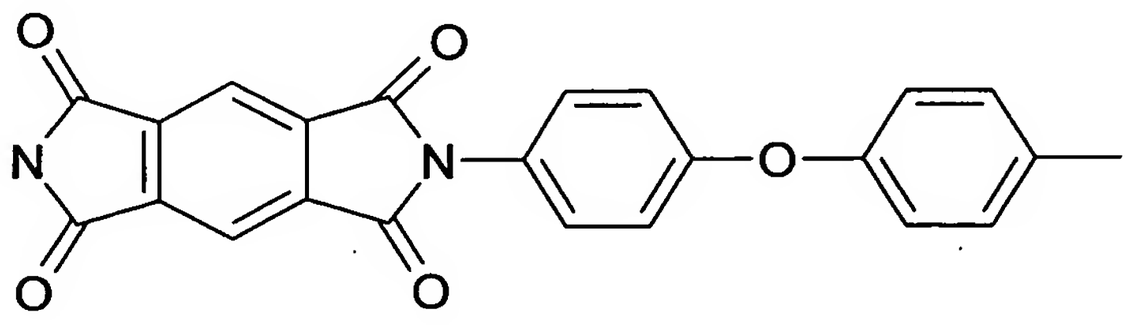
3. (Currently Amended) Alignment layer according to claim 1 ~~or 2~~, characterized in that the RM(s) is(are) present in monomeric or oligomeric form in the alignment layer after its preparation.

4. (Currently Amended) Alignment layer according to claim 1 ~~at least one of claims 1 to 3~~, characterized in that it is obtainable from a precursor material comprising at least one reactive mesogen (RM).

5. (Currently Amended) Alignment layer according to claim 1 ~~at least one of claims 1 to 4~~, characterized in that it is a solvent processed film.

6. (Currently Amended) Alignment layer according to claim 1 ~~at least one of claims 1 to 5~~, characterized in that it is a polyimide film.

7. (Original) Alignment layer according to claim 6, characterized in that it is a polyimide film of the general formula A



A

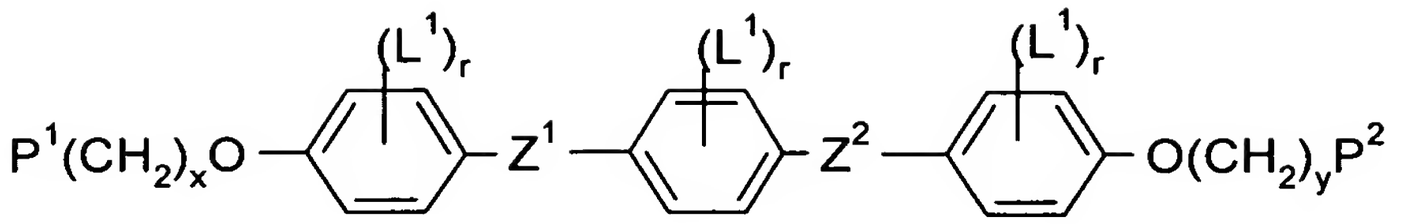
8. (Currently Amended) Alignment layer according to claim 1 ~~at least one of claims 1 to 5~~, characterized in that it is a solvent processed cellulose based film.

9. (Currently Amended) Alignment layer according to claim 1 ~~at least one of claims 1 to 5~~, characterized in that it is a triacetate cellulose (TAC) or diacetate cellulose (DAC) film.

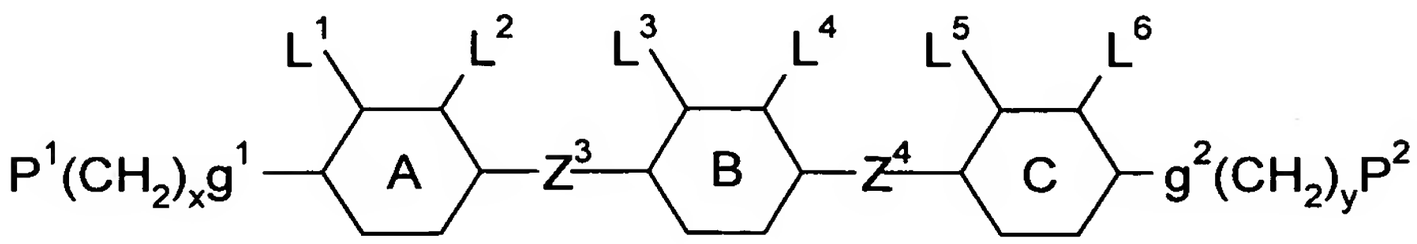
10. (Currently Amended) Alignment layer according to claim 1 ~~at least one of claims 1 to 5~~, characterized in that it is a command layer comprising one or more compounds selected from photochromic compounds, isomerisable compounds, chromophores and dyes, wherein changes of the chemical structure and/or the orientational direction of these compounds induce a specific alignment of an LC material coated onto said layer.

11. (Original) Alignment layer according to claim 10, characterized in that said compounds are selected from derivatives of azobenzene, stilbenes, spiropyran, spirooxadines, α-hydrazono-β-ketoesters, cinnamate, retinylidene, chalcone, coumarins, benzylidenephthalimidines, benzylideneacetophenones, diphenylacetylene or stilbazoles.

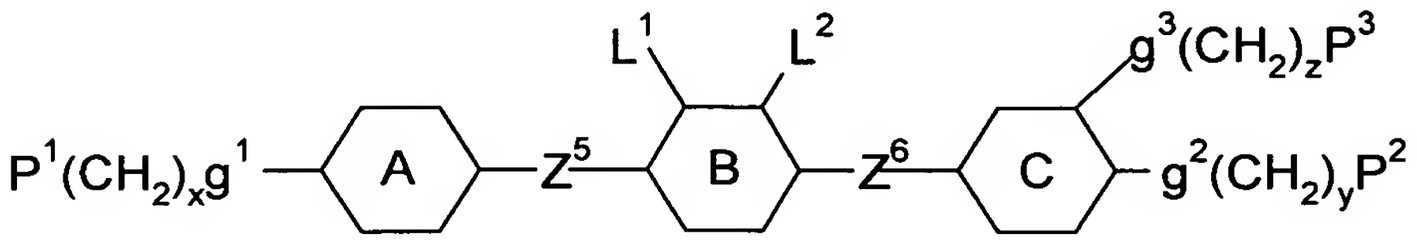
12. (Currently Amended) Alignment layer according to claim 1 ~~at least one of claims 1 to 11~~, characterized in that the RMs are selected of the following formulae



I



II



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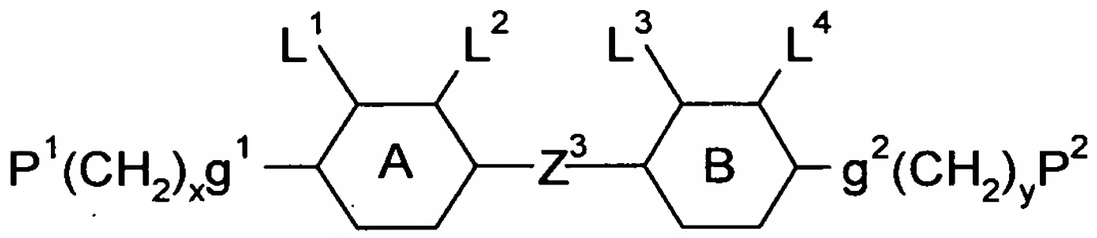

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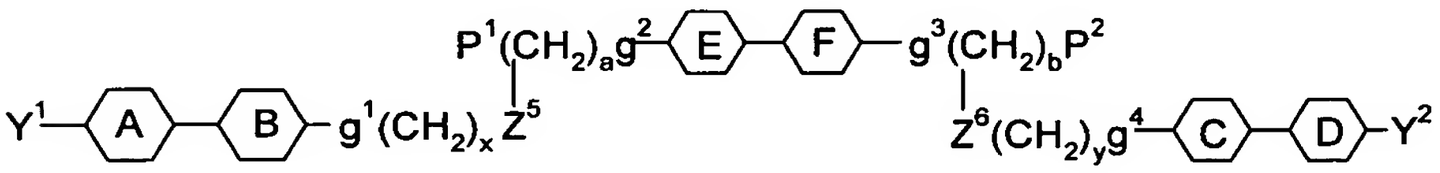
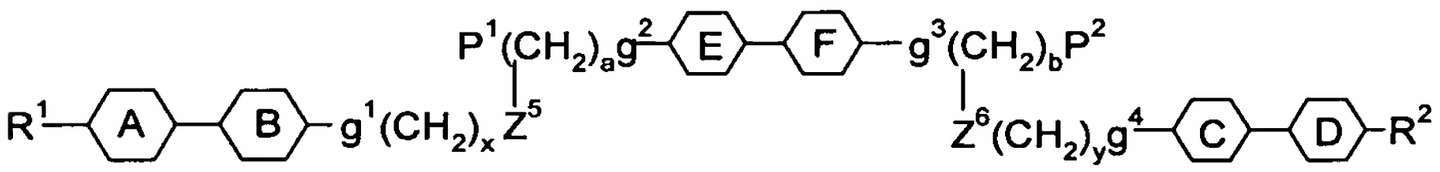


V



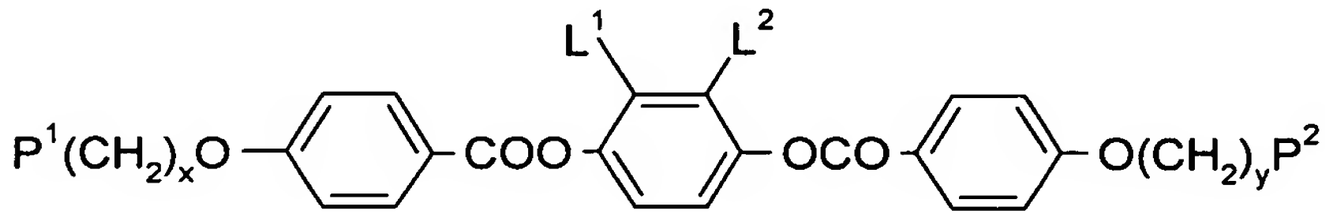
VI

wherein

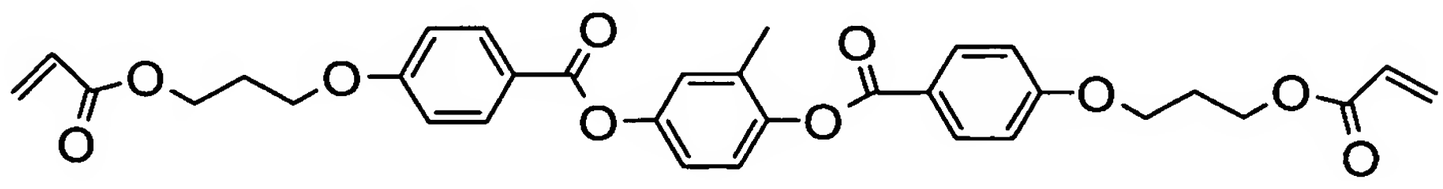
P^1, P^2 and P^3	are independently of each other a polymerisable group,
Z^1 and Z^2	are independently of each other, -O-, -S-, -CO-, -COO-, -OCO-, -O-COO-, $-OCH_2-$, $-CH_2O-$, $-CH_2CH_2-$, -C≡C-, -CH=CH-COO-, -OCO-CH=CH- or a single bond,
Z^3 and Z^4	are independently of each other -COO-, -OCO-, $-CH_2CH_2-$, $-CH_2O-$, $-OCH_2-$, -CH=CH-, -CF=CF-, -C≡C- or a single bond,

Z^5 and Z^6	are independently of each other -O-, -COO-, -OCO-, -CH_2CH_2-, -CH_2O-, -OCH_2- or a single bond,
Y^1 and Y^2	are independently of each other a polar group,
R^1 and R^2	are independently of each other an unpolar alkyl or alkoxy group,
A, B, C and D	are independently of each other 1,4-phenylene that is optionally mono- di or trisubstituted by L^1, L^2, L^3, L^4, L^5, L^6 or 1,4-cyclohexylene,
L^1, L^2, L^3, L^4, L^5 and L^6	are independently of each other H, F, Cl, CN or an optionally halogenated alkyl, alkoxy, alkylcarbonyl, alkoxycarbonyl or alkoxycarbonyloxy group with 1 to 7 C atoms.
r	is 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4,
x and y	are each independently an integer from 1 to 12,
z	is 1, 2 or 3,
g^1,g^2,g^3 and g^4	are independently of each other a single bond, -O-, -COO- or –OCO-,.

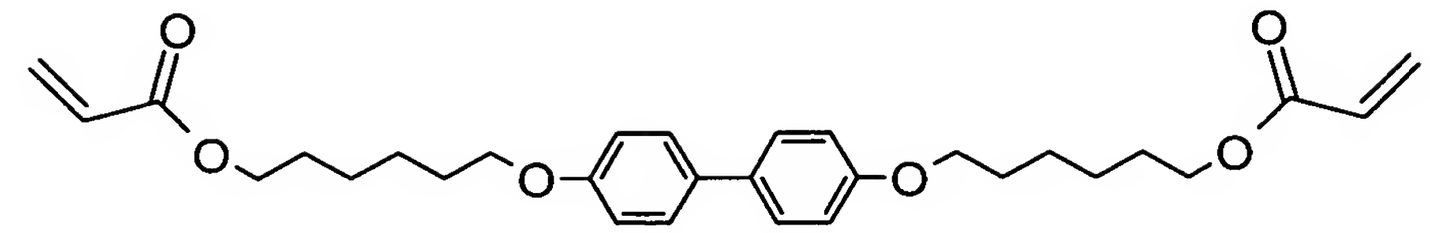
13. (Currently Amended) Alignment layer according to claim 12, characterized in that the RMs are selected of the following formulae



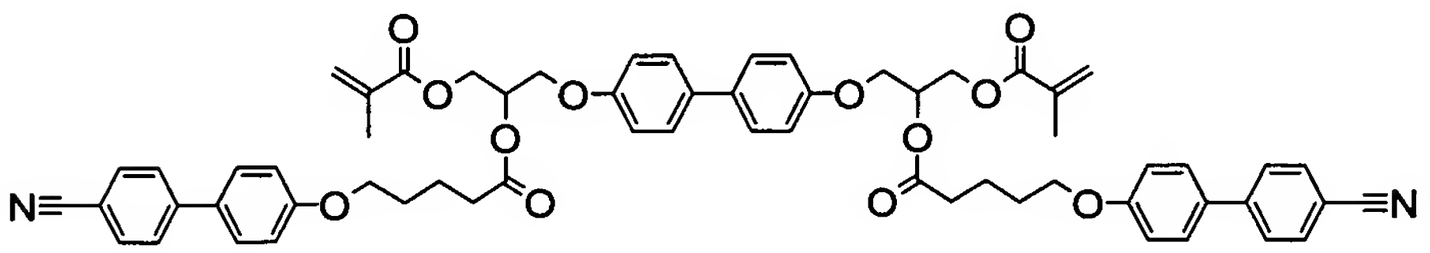
Ia



IIa



IVa



Va

~~wherein P^1, P^2, x, y, L^1 and L^2 are as defined in claim 9~~ and the alignment layer is a TAC or DAC film.

14. (Currently Amended) Alignment layer according to claim 1 ~~at least one of claims 1 to 13~~, characterized in that the precursor material comprises 0.5 to 4 % by weight of RMs.

15. (Currently Amended) Polymer precursor as defined in claim 4 ~~at least one of claims 4 to 14~~.

16. (Currently Amended) Use of an alignment layer according to claim 1 ~~at least one of claims 1 to 14~~ as substrate and/or alignment layer of liquid crystal (LC) materials.

17. (Currently Amended) Laminate comprising an alignment layer according to claim 1 ~~at least one of claims 1 to 14~~ and a film comprising polymerised or crosslinked LC material.

18. (Currently Amended) Method of preparing a laminate ~~according to claim 17~~ by providing a layer of a polymerisable LC material onto an alignment layer according to claim 1 ~~at least one of claims 1 to 14~~, optionally aligning the LC material into uniform orientation, and polymerising or crosslinking the LC material.

19. (Currently Amended) Use of a precursor material, alignment layer or laminate according to claim 1 ~~at least one of claims 1 to 17~~ in optical, electrooptical, information storage, decorative and security applications.

20. (Currently Amended) Optical component or device comprising at least one precursor material, alignment layer or laminate according to claim 1 ~~at least one of claims 1 to 17~~.

21. (Currently Amended) Liquid crystal display comprising at least one alignment layer or laminate according to claim 1 ~~at least one of claims 1 to 17~~ or a component comprising the same ~~according to claim 20~~.